

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05 MCT-01 /098 W
-----103657 130815Z /15

R 120030Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3466
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 1063

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, ID, PP
SUBJECT: PNG/IRIAN JAYA BORDER PROBLEMS CONTINUE

REF: PORT MORESBY 1026

1. SUMMARY: REPORTS OF INDONESIAN BOMBING (REFTEL) AND STRAFING ALONG BORDER AREA HAS BROUGHT FLURRY OF ACTIVITY. SOME 270 WEST IRIAN VILLAGERS HAVE CROSSED INTO WEST SEPIK, PNG DEFENCE FORCE HAS PULLED BACK AND WITHDRAWN SOME TROOPS AND GPNG REPORTEDLY HAS ASKED JAKARTA TO LIMIT MILITARY ACTIVITIES TO 5 MILES FROM BORDER. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY JULY 10, ASKING INDONESIANS TO RESPECT PNG SOVEREIGNTY AND CALLING ON GPNG TO SEEK UN HELP IF ATTACKS PERSIST. SOMARE GOVERNMENT FACES DIFFICULT PROBLEM IN DEALING WITH POPULAR SYMPATHIES FOR WEST IRIANS AND GROWING FEAR, HOWEVER IRRATIONAL, THAT INDONESIA HAS SERIOUS DESIGNS ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA. END SUMMARY.

2. INFORMATION FROM BORDER AREA IS SKETCHY AND FOLLOWING
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BASED LARGELY ON MEDIA STORIES WHICH CLAIM TO BE USING OFFICIAL SOURCES. BOMBING REPORTED IN REFTEL SINCE CONFIRMED BY INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR AND SPOKESMAN FOR PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE. BOMBING AND/OR STRAFING RUNS REPORTEDLY HIT BORDER AREA NEAR MT. BOUGAINVILLE AND AREA WEST OF WEST SEPIK VILLAGE OF NEW SEKOUTRAKO. PRESS QUOTED GPNG OFFICIAL AS HAVING SAID GOVERNMENT TOLD JAKARTA

TO RESTRICT OPERATIONS TO A BOMB LINE 5 MILES FROM BORDER BUT INDONESIANS REPLIED THAT THEY CONSIDER CERTAIN PNG VILLAGES UNDER INDONESIA'S JURISDICTION. THIS LATER DENIED BY INDO AMBASSADOR. PRESS CLAIMS STRIKEMASTER JETS AND/OR OV-10S USED IN ATTACKS.

3. STRONGEST REACTION HAS BEEN FROM UPNG STUDENTS AND FACULTY. SOME STUDENTS AND LECTURES, INCLUDING TONY DEKLIN, FORMER PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PM SOMARE, EXPRESSED FEAR THAT PNG " SLOWLY ENTERING A STATE OF WAR WITH INDONESIA". STUDENTS ACCUSED INDOS OF VIOLATING AGREEMENT ALLOWING FOR FREE MOVEMENT OF SOME ETHNIC GROUPS AND BOMBING HUNTING GROUNDS. SOME 300 STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY AT INDONESIAN EMBASSY AND PNG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES JULY 10. THEY CALLED ON INDONESIA TO RESPECT PNG SOVEREIGNTY AND STANDING AGREEMENTS WITH PNG. THEY ALSO PETITIONED GPNG TO REINSTATE SECURITY FORCES WHICH HAD BEEN "THINNED OUT" OVER THE WEEKEND AND TO SEEK UN HELP IF BORDER BOMBINGS CONTINUED.

4. JULY 11 PRESS REPORTS SOME 270 WEST IRIANESE HAVE CROSSED BORDER AND ARE AT IMONDA, ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS INTO WEST SEPIK. PRESS ALSO QUOTES OFFICIAL AS HAVING SAID PNG DEFENSE FORCES WERE BEING WITHDRAWN BECAUSE THEY WERE SATISFIED REBELS WERE NOT OPERATING IN PNG TERRITORY AND THEY WERE NOT CARRYING OUT A JOINT CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATION WITH INDONESIANS.

5. GOVERNMENT FACES SEVERAL PROBLEMS AS OUTGROWTH OF BORDER SITUATION. OPPOSITION CRITICS HAVE QUESTIONED LEGALITY OF DEPLOYMENT OF DEFENSE FORCE TROOPS TO BORDER ALTHOUGH CRITICISM GENERALLY HAS BEEN RESTRAINED. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS RESTRAINT WILL LAST MUCH LONGER. STUDENTS ARE BECOMING UPSET AND IRRATIONAL FEAR OF AN INDONESIAN ATTACK ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS BEEN VOICED OPENLY BY STUDENTS AND IN PRIVATE BY OTHERS, INCLUDING PNG DEFENCE FORCE COMMANDER DIRO. IN THE PAST THE BORDER PROBLEM HAS WAXED WANED. IT COULD WANE QUICKLY AGAIN BUT SIZABLE (FOR THIS AREA) MILITARY OPERATIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER HAVE ADDED A NEW DIMENSION AND STRENGTHENED CONVICTION IN SOME QUARTERS THAT INDONESIA HAS DESIGNS ON PNG. OLMSTED

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Message Attributes

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